

Gina Mouser

From: Vernon Crawford [vacrawford@msn.com]
Sent: Friday, April 18, 2008 5:22 AM
To: Vernon Pickup-Crawford
Subject: K-12 Education Update for 4/17

Just when you thought it might be safe....

We have confirmation that the House and Senate top leadership (Rep. Ray Sansom/Sen. Lisa Carlton) worked out a tentative agreement on K-12 funding. We have nothing in writing, but expect you may see some press accounts in the morning. Essentially:

- tax collections point to a continuation of revenues coming in less than estimated last month, not just for lottery ticket sales as we mentioned over the weekend. This means neither the House nor Senate education budgets, as adopted early this month, are funded;
- the revenue picture is having major implications beyond public schools including healthcare (health depts, cost of Florida Medicaid, etc.), public safety (corrections, courts, etc.), as well as every other state function;
- what appears to be included in the education settlement is the House moving toward the Senate budget that transfers .2-mills in local capital funds into the operating Required Local Effort, the Senate agreeing to a lower House Local Discretionary Millage rate of .49 mills in lieu of the current .51 levy, and reduction of trust funds to offset lower revenues. All said, it translates to a 2% reduction rather than the 1.63% previously held by the Senate and 1.2% by the House. Average reduction in the Base Student Allocation would be closer to \$120/FTE from right now, instead of \$85/FTE in the House and \$115/FTE in the Senate position.
- While K-12 is taking a hit, it pales in comparison to pending reductions in other state services.

There has yet to be any public conference committee meetings. We expect a regular session, record short meeting time of 5pm next Monday to 6pm next Tuesday. Again, nothing is available in writing at this time or been publicly announced by conferees (except, again, what may appear in the press tomorrow).

For planning purposes, we suggest you refer to the Senate budget for K-12 by district and take another .4% as a very rough estimate.

Meanwhile, the Florida School Boards Association has put out an alert asking FSBA members to contact their Delegation members and conference committee members (members are: Senators Wise, Siplin, Bullard, Constantine, Dockery, and Garcia and Representatives Pickens, Traviesa, Altman, Bendross-Mindingall, Coley, Culp, Kiar, Kriseman, Legg, McBurney, McKeel, and Vana.). From FSBA:

"In the meantime, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS IN THE HOUSE AND SENATE and ask them to:

1. support efforts to take \$300 million from the state's "Rainy Day" reserves to help hold school districts harmless from further reductions, and
2. support the Senate's position that increases the revenue from the Required Local Effort millage levy by transferring 0.2 mills from the district's 2-mill Capital Outlay millage authority for one year only; and
3. ensure that districts have complete flexibility in the use of all dollars available to them; and
4. place an absolute moratorium on the creation of new programs or expansion of existing programs" (e.g., middle school P-E).

To this list you may wish to consider adding:

5. keep the Senate's Discretionary Millage at .51-mills;